



AN INFORMATIONAL RESOURCE FOR PROGRAMS, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES THAT CREATE THE VIRGINIA BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

August / September 2004

Workforce Services Breaks Project Record

DBA's Workforce Services program assisted 507 companies during fiscal year 2004 and provided training for 16,242 Virginians a 49 percent increase in projects from the year before. DBA's Workforce Services division works with new and existing companies to provide customized recruitment and training to qualified workers at all skill levels for newly created jobs. Staff offers consulting services for companies implementing soft-skill, continuous improvement, and specialized training programs. Virginia receives a 100% return on investment for this program from the trained worker within six months.

Workforce Services launched two new programs in fiscal year 2003 which were so successful they were continued. The **Small Business New Jobs Program** supports existing Virginia companies that have 250 employees or less companywide, are hiring at least 5 new full-time employees and making a capital investment of at least \$100,000. DBA worked with 181 companies in this program - helping create 1,268 new jobs in fiscal year 2004. The **Retraining Program** provides services and funding to existing Virginia businesses that are retooling and installing new technologies to meet market demands. DBA worked with 113 companies in this program to help retrain 6,674 jobs. **IV04**

Access to Capital Available for Southside Tobacco Region Businesses

Six banks in the Southside Tobacco Region have signed up for the Virginia **Tobacco Capital Access Program** (TCAP) - a program designed to make financing available to entrepreneurs and businesses in the Southside Tobacco Region that do not qualify for conventional financing.

"Thanks to the financial commitment of the Tobacco Commission, participating banks will have a lending tool that will enable the banks to provide greater access to financing to eligible area businesses," Governor Mark R. Warner said. "Through this partnership, we expect to increase entrepreneurial opportunity, and therefore jobs, in the Southside Tobacco Region."

The Bank of McKenney, Bank of Southside Virginia, Citizens Bank and Trust, Bank of Charlotte County, Citizen's Community Bank, and American National Bank have joined the TCAP program. The program is funded by the Southside Economic Development Committee of the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission and is administered

and managed by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority (VSBFA).

The TCAP loan program uses an insurance concept on a portfolio of loans - establishing a loan loss reserve account funded by enrollment fees paid by the borrower and the bank. These fees are matched by the VSBFA through the funding of the Tobacco Commission.

"To encourage immediate participation and loan enrollment, the Tobacco Commission is providing an advance match of \$50,000," said Virginia Tobacco Commission Executive Director Carthan F. Currin, III. "And for the first \$1,000,000 of enrolled loans, the Commission will provide a double match to help build up the reserve account more quickly."

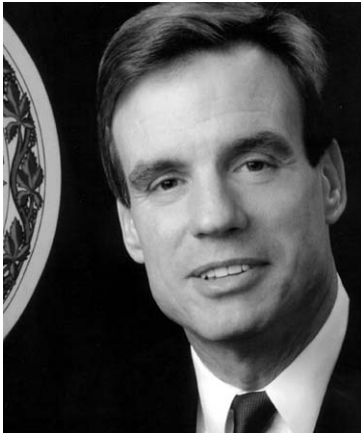
TCAP is a non-bureaucratic, user-friendly and efficient means of accessing government support for business lending. The participating bank underwrites, sets the terms of the loans, and closes the loans using their own loan documents. TCAP provides for a very attractive leveraging of public to private funding and is favored

Virginia's June Job Growth Rate Doubles National Average

By Governor Mark R. Warner

June 2004 saw Virginia reach an employment record, with a non-agricultural payroll job count of 3,671,600 jobs, exceeding the previous record of 3,596,800 jobs reported in December of 2000. The Commonwealth has historically exhibited a strong economy when compared to other states, and these figures reinforce that fact. The current annual employment gain for the Commonwealth stands at 2.3 percent, which is double the national average of 1.1 percent over the same time period. Virginia's workers and employees have demonstrated their ability to weather uncertain economic times, and this job growth rate is proof that we have made a strong recovery from the job losses incurred during the 2001-2002 recession.

According to Bill Metzger, Chief Economist of the Virginia Employment Commission, our record job creation is "fueled by strong growth in the sectors of technology, business and



professional services, defense contracting, construction and tourism." These industries are vital to the future of the Commonwealth, and my administration has worked hard to make the business environment hospitable to companies that can provide jobs for our citizens while successfully adding value to Virginia's economy. While Mr. Metzger points out that the raw number of jobs may drop in the coming months due to the release of 35,000 school service workers, I am confident that job growth in Virginia will remain strong. Our economy will continue to stand out nationally as Virginia maintains a business-friendly environment.

This report of record job numbers provides evidence that the Commonwealth of Virginia's economy is one of the strongest in the nation. Coupled with the retention of our AAA bond rating, our annual rate of job growth causes me to be optimistic about the economic opportunities for our state as we move forward in the second half of my term as Governor. The recent passage of a fiscally responsible budget underlines Virginia's commitment to sound economic policy, and my administration will continue to run state government in a way that will maximize its value to the citizens of the Commonwealth. I am committed to providing Virginians with the opportunity for more and better jobs while maintaining the Commonwealth's status as an attractive and inviting home for the business community. **IV04**

CALENDAR

- 09.15.04 Virginia Business & Economic Development Seminar: Meet Virginia...She's Working For You
  - 09.22.04 Selling to Virginia: Opportunities for Success
  - 09.26.04 to 09.28.04 Virginia Information Technology Symposium
  - 09.29.04 to 10.01.04 VEDA Conference
- Visit [www.dba.state.va.us](http://www.dba.state.va.us) for more details and other events.

by many in national and local economic development financing. TCAP details, eligibility requirements and application information can be found online on the Department of Business Assistance Website, or by calling the Virginia Business Information Center at 1.866.248.8814. **IV04**

### VBIC Sees Increase In Call Volume

Sensible business owners have discovered a free and easy way to get information and solve problems. The **Virginia Business Information Center** (VBIC), a resource for business information and problem solving administered by DBA, has been responding to an average of 400 requests for assistance each week from existing businesses and budding entrepreneurs across the Commonwealth and the nation - a 112 percent increase in volume from the previous year.

VBIC was officially developed in fiscal year 2002 through the use of existing resources - including experienced economic developers who began staffing the call center. It was designed to improve communication, reduce service redundancy and provide businesses with easier access to an extensive clearing-house of resources.

The increase in volume validates the value of VBIC to Virginia’s business communities. In the past year, VBIC has surpassed its expected number of requests for assistance by approximately 25 percent - responding to nearly 21,900 business related inquiries. Roughly 20 percent of inquiries are from out-of-state companies trying to establish a presence in Virginia.

“VBIC has provided me valuable information on how to start up a business, the loop-holes to avoid and step-by-step guidance - from the different

types of licensing to obtaining tax identification,” said Hai Nguyen, a Northern Virginia businessman. “They saved me countless time in digging through the internet. Thanks to VBIC, my business is growing very rapidly and doubling profits each month.”

VBIC representatives respond to a range of inquiries from simply “getting started” to other very business specific questions. The four-man VBIC team can be reached by either telephone or e-mail and typically respond to business related inquiries within 24-hours of receipt. The Virginia Business Information Center can be reached by calling 804.371.0438, toll free at 1.866.248.8814 or via email at VBIC@dba.virginia.gov.

IV04

### StargazerNET ReadyLinks Offer Free Emergency Preparedness for Businesses

StargazerNET ReadyLinks is now available through DBA’s list of web-based resources. StargazerNET is a not-for-profit internet platform and portal designed to facilitate and support the activities of individuals and organizations - providing a private link on the web for critical information in an emergency.

The five-year-old StargazerNET is the major project of the Stargazer Foundation that offers businesses and individuals useful applications for creating

ASK VBIC

**I am being harassed by a collection agent - what do I do ?** This is often resolved by reaching a payment agreement with your creditor. In all cases, however, it is wise to keep records of calls and correspondence. The Office of Consumer Affairs (in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services) has a summary of complaint topics to direct the consumer to the correct agency for resolution.

The Federal Trade Commission also has a complaint system to aid consumers. Note that, in persistent cases, it is illegal for a collection company to keep calling once you have told them in writing to stop.

For more information visit the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs at [www.vdacs.state.va.us/consumers/index.html](http://www.vdacs.state.va.us/consumers/index.html) or for a consumer complaint form, visit the Federal Trade commission at [m.ftc.gov/pls/dod/wsolcq\\$.startup?Z\\_ORG\\_CODE=PU01](http://m.ftc.gov/pls/dod/wsolcq$.startup?Z_ORG_CODE=PU01).

**How can I get an ad for my business on an Interstate highway sign?** The Virginia Department of Transportation has a program for travel service logos on the signs near highway exits. To read more about the program, participant requirements and to obtain an application, visit [www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/faq-logo-program.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/infoservice/faq-logo-program.asp).

VIRGINIA BUSINESS INFORMATION CENTER

(804) 371-0438 OR (866) 248-8814 toll free  
vbic@dba.virginia.gov

web-based educational experiences, storing and retrieving valuable content, and facilitating online group efforts. Stargazer Chairman and CEO Art Bushkin, describes the free service as “an online service for social good.” Families, schools and communities can also develop private, individualized communications plans.

StargazerNET is also working closely with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and some federal agencies. ReadyLinks for neighborhoods and first responders will soon be available.

StargazerNET can be used to communicate and collaborate, share knowledge and experience, find and organize resources, and contribute and

volunteer for the benefit of others. It is a global internet platform and portal that expands the capabilities and web presence of nonprofit activities and organizations.

IV04

DBA to Host Tourism Seminar in Charlottesville

SAVE-THE-DATE WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2004

for the Virginia Business & Economic Development Seminar

Holiday Inn University Area & Conference Center Charlottesville, VA

PLEASE LET US KNOW:

If you no longer wish to receive *Inside Virginia*, would be willing to receive it electronically, or if you have a former colleague who still receives mailings and needs to be removed, email changes to [carolyn.conlon@dba.virginia.gov](mailto:carolyn.conlon@dba.virginia.gov)

Presorted Standard U.S. POSTAGE PAID Richmond, VA Permit No. 1225